



Office Distribution
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
INFORMATION SERVICE

2/12/5

Annual Report

The attached release pertaining to the Annual Report of the
Secretary of the Interior for 1950 is for immediate release
February 13, 1951.

X X X



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

Annual Report

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release on Receipt

2/13/51

EXPLORATORY FISHING POINTS WAY TO NEW GROUNDS

Exploratory fishing investigations being conducted by the Fish and Wildlife Service are pointing the way to the discovery and progressive development of new fishing grounds which may supply important additions to world food stocks, Secretary of the Interior Oscar L. Chapman said today, in releasing the Department's annual report for fiscal 1950.

Investigations in the mid-Pacific area indicate the existence of potential tuna fisheries comparable with those that have for many years been one of the most valuable resources of the West Coast of the United States, he said. Properly developed, these oceanic tuna resources should provide substantial quantities of food and income for the people of the United States and the Pacific Island possessions, he added.

Director Albert M. Day of the Fish and Wildlife Service said that exploratory fishing such as that undertaken in the central Pacific, north Pacific, Alaska, north Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico offers new food sources, relieving the strain on breeding stocks of fish in present breeding grounds.

A 3-month albacore tuna survey was conducted in waters off Washington and southeastern Alaska. Two extensive exploratory cruises in the Gulf of Mexico resulted in the location of "little tuna," large shrimp, snappers, groupers, and heavy concentrations of menhaden. A 4-month survey in the off-shore waters of the North Pacific located the first albacore tuna of the season.

During 1949 a new record was set for the number of boats and units of gear operated in Alaska. The salmon canning industry in the Southeastern Alaska area had the best operating season in eight years. A total of 70,991 fur-seal skins were taken on the Pribilof Islands from surplus male animals during 1949.

Studies to determine causes for the "red tide" were continued at Sarasota, Fla. Pacific pilchard observations were conducted along the Pacific coast from Lower California to the Columbia River, and extending hundreds of miles at sea. A new specialized laboratory for oyster research was opened at Beaufort, N. C.

Despite the fact that current fish food costs are extremely high and improvement and expansion programs are needed at many of the hatcheries, the production of game-fish for the stocking of public and private waters during 1949, in general, was at a high level. Ninety-five Federal hatcheries were in operation in 42 states.

An appropriation of \$10,378,538--the second largest since the inception of the program in 1938--financed the Federal aid program for restoration of wildlife. With the addition of the contribution of 25 percent made by the states, a total of \$15,499,315 was available for project activities in fiscal year 1950. A record total of 703 projects was approved by the Service.

The Service administered 282 refuges, for waterfowl and other species, including big game. A comprehensive soil and moisture plan of operation was completed for each refuge and the land, totaling 18 million acres, is now being classified in accordance with its capabilities.

For the first time in history, satisfactory mole control was attained in portions of Oregon. This state was also a proving ground for a technique that promises effective control of tree-seed-eating mice which have long hampered the reforestation of logged and burned-over forest areas. In other states the experimental application of the new rodenticide, Warfarin, proved highly effective against rats and house mice.

The recorded catch of predatory animals included 66,281 coyotes, 1,159 wolves, 10,874 bobcats and lynxes, 753 stock-killing bears, and 236 mountain lions. In rodent control operations, 12,159,797 acres of land were treated for the elimination of prairie dogs, ground squirrels, pocket gophers, jack rabbits, field mice, cotton rats, kangaroo rats, porcupines, woodchucks, and moles.

A total of 510 convictions was obtained for violations of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act during fiscal year 1950. Resulting fines and costs amounted to \$34,472, with jail sentences of 1,115 days.

X X X